

## Request for info on wastewater from Marcellus

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This was in today's BNA report. Never mind if you already had it.

### EPA Asks Shale Gas Drillers for Details Of Wastewater Disposal, Recycling Practices

PHILADELPHIA—The Environmental Protection Agency on May 12 directed with operations in Pennsylvania to disclose what they do with the wastewater generated in the course of exploration, extraction, and production of gas in the Marcellus shale formation.

EPA's request for information comes on the heels of a call by Pennsylvania environmental regulators for all natural gas drilling operators to stop sending wastewater from Marcellus shale gas wells to 16 Pennsylvania treatment facilities by May 19.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) said its request was motivated by evidence linking drilling process wastewater to elevated levels of bromides in western Pennsylvania rivers ().

EPA said it wants to know where drillers are now going to dispose of their wastewater.

“We want to make sure that the drillers are handling their wastewater in an environmentally responsible manner,” EPA Region 3 Administrator Shawn M. Garvin said in a statement.

The companies were directed to report to EPA regarding their disposal and recycling practices by May 25.

EPA sent the information requests to Atlas Resources LLC, Talisman Energy USA, Range Resources-Appalachia LLC, Cabot Oil and Gas Corp., SWEPI LP, and Chesapeake Energy Corp.

The six companies account for more than 50 percent of the natural gas drilling in Pennsylvania, EPA said.

Guidelines for State Regulators

In a separate letter to DEP Secretary Michael Krancer, EPA asked the state agency to put a high priority on modifying or reissuing discharge permits for wastewater treatment plants that are still accepting Marcellus shale wastewater after May 19 “to include proper permit conditions and effluent limitations for the pollutants of concern identified in the Marcellus shale wastewater.”

Permits for treatment facilities that are allowed to accept drilling process wastewater but do not accept it should be reopened and modified as soon as possible, but no later than May 31, 2012, EPA said.

EPA asked to be notified when facilities are accepting shale gas extraction wastewater so the agency can assess if a pretreatment program or additional permit limits are needed.

The federal agency asked the DEP if it plans to require drillers to submit modified wastewater disposal plans and said it believes any changes to drilling disposal practices should be legally enforceable.

In addition, EPA asked that the state apply water quality standards for the protection of drinking water at the point of wastewater discharge, rather than at the point of first downstream drinking water intake.

EPA notified the state agency that it has sent a letter to DEP's southwest regional office clarifying that federal underground injection control permits are required for any placement of hydraulic fracturing wastes in injection wells or bore holes.

By

EPA's letters to gas drillers and to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection are posted at .

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